

Testimony in support of the Nursing Home Safe Staffing and Quality Care Act

(Representative Slater: H-5012)

House Finance Committee March 4, 2021

Dear Chairman Abney and Members of the House Finance Committee,

I've been a CNA for 33 years. I started working at Charlesgate when my son was two months, and he's 27 now, so I've been taking care of our residents here for almost three decades. Even after all that time, I still only make \$16.01 per hour.

You just can't make it by on this paycheck. My husband is a cook, and even when he was working 70 plus hours a week and I was picking up overtime, we still couldn't pay the bills. Every week, we have choices to make. This week we had to choose between the water bill and the electric. We walk around Stop & Shop with a calculator.

A few years back, our gas got shut off. We had to ask my daughter, who was in college at the time, for a couple hundred bucks to turn the gas back on. It's a horrible thing as parents when you need to ask your daughter, who is in school trying to get a better life, for money for the basics.

And that was when my husband was working. A few years ago, he got hurt and he's been out of work. His unemployment ran out, we fell behind on the mortgage, now we're in foreclosure. Now we're moving in with my daughter. After working hard our whole lives, it just isn't right.

No matter what's happening at home though, the one thing I make sure of is that I never take it out on my patients. I make sure they always get a smile, no matter what.

But it just shouldn't be this way. We've worked hard. I pick up overtime, we don't live a lavish lifestyle. We've done everything right and it's still not enough.

Sincerely,

Aggie Clark, CNA Charlesgate
Providence, RI